



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Glacier National Park
International Peace Park
Biosphere Reserve
World Heritage Site

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Glacier National Park News Release

May 16, 2003

For Immediate Release

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NEWS03-26

Final Going-to-the-Sun Road Plan/Environmental Impact Statement Released

Preferred alternative: Shared Use (Construction & Visitor Use)

WEST GLACIER, MONT. -- The Going-to-the-Sun Road Rehabilitation Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Glacier National Park has arrived from the printer, park superintendent Mick Holm announced today. This plan identifies the National Park Service's (NPS) preferred alternative to rehabilitate the Going-to-the-Sun (Sun) Road and summarizes public comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. The final plan/EIS also contains the NPS response to substantive public comments which were posed during the review period.

The NPS' preferred alternative is to rehabilitate the Going-to-the-Sun Road over a seven- to eight-year period, beginning in 2004. Rehabilitation includes repairs to historic retaining walls, guard walls, tunnels, and other structural features contributing to the historic character of the Sun Road. This preferred alternative was also recommended to the NPS by the Going-to-the-Sun Road Citizens Advisory Committee in December 2001.

The NPS also proposes to implement mitigation measures such as transit service during construction, additional exhibits and interpretive information, and other visitor use improvements and programs to aid visitors and businesses during road rehabilitation.

Under the preferred alternative, the Sun Road and access to Logan Pass would remain open during the primary visitor season. The NPS concluded that the preferred alternative provides the best overall balance in addressing needed road rehabilitation, protecting and preserving historic, scenic and natural resources, while allowing continued visitor access and minimizing impacts on regional businesses.

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Other alternatives considered for rehabilitation of the Sun Road included: 1) the No Action (Status Quo) alternative – rehabilitation of the road over a 50-year period based on current funding levels; 2) priority rehabilitation over 20 years; 3) or an accelerated completion alternative, which would take six to eight years to complete. The consequences of these actions on socioeconomic, cultural and natural resources were initially discussed in the Draft EIS released for a 60-day public comment period in September 2002.

Holm noted, “Several changes have been made to the preferred alternative and impact assessment following receipt of public comments, completion of the 2002 visitor survey and other information that recently became available to the NPS; however, the basic elements of the (preferred) alternative, including schedule and traffic management, remain the same.”

According to Holm, the principal modifications to the preferred alternative are to visitor use facilities: a) The Baring Creek Cabin Trailhead Parking Area was eliminated from consideration because of the potential impacts to grizzly bear and other wildlife in this area. b) Use of the Logan Creek gravel pit as an oversized vehicle turnaround and parking area following rehabilitation was eliminated because of the potential effect on harlequin ducks and streamside resources. c) Minor improvements were added to several existing pullouts along the road. d) In addition, transit service under the preferred alternative was expanded to provide 14 shuttle vehicles operating at 30 minute intervals to improve the level of service.

The Final Environmental Impact Statement will be available for 30 days prior to issuance of a Record of Decision (ROD) by the National Park Service.

This Sun Road Plan/Final EIS is available on the park website at www.nps.gov/glac/plans.htm. Any questions or concerns regarding this final plan can be submitted via email at glac_public_comments@nps.gov or submitted in writing to Superintendent, Glacier National Park, P.O. Box 128, West Glacier, Montana 59936, Attn: Going-to-the-Sun (Sun) Road Plan/FEIS.

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